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THE DUNES PAGEANT
By Frank V. Dudley

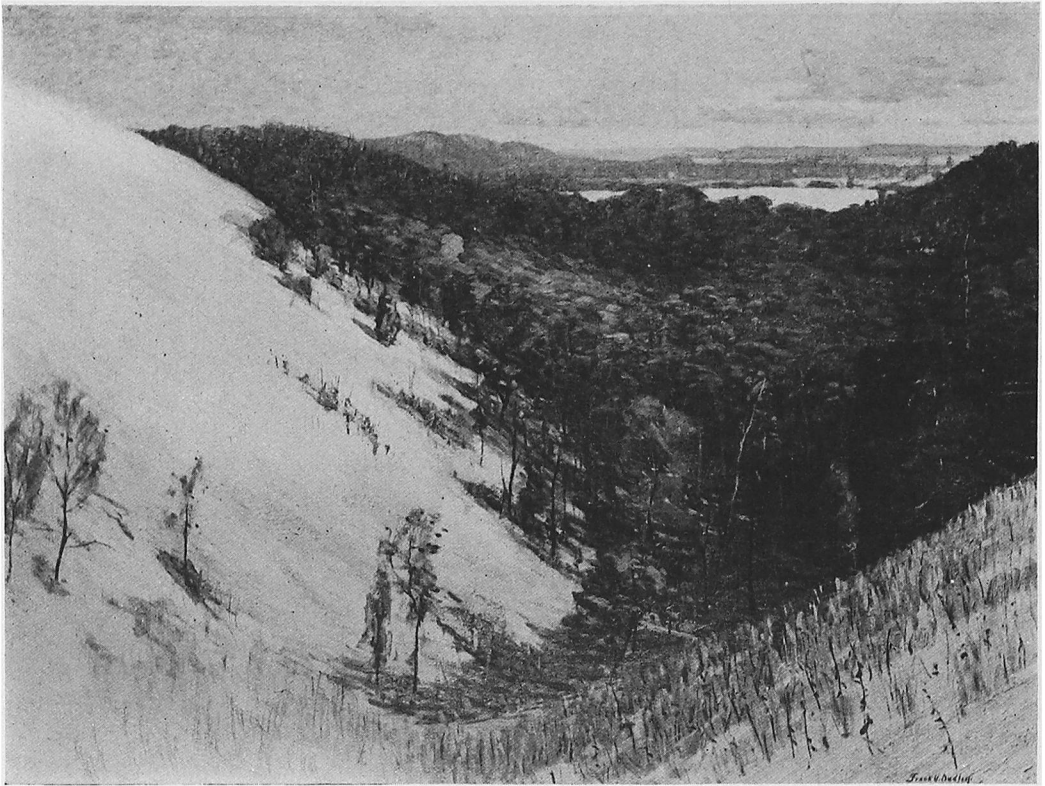
Lake Michigan's Wonderful Dunes

By A. G. RICHARDS

THE recent exhibition at the Art Institute of thirty canvases by Frank V. Dudley emphasized the interest that has developed and the work that has been done in furthering the proposition of securing Lake Michigan's wonderful dunes for a national park.

The exhibition indeed was a revelation not only artistically but in the matter of information as to the various clubs and societies who have participated in this project. The catalog of the show announced that the exhibition was given under the auspices of the Friends of Our Native Landscape, the Dunes Pageant Association, and the Conservation Council

consisting of the Chicago and Riverside Chapters of the Wild Flower Preservation Society of America, the Geographic Society of Chicago, the Audubon Society of Illinois, the Prairie Club, the Horticultural Society, the Municipal Art League, the Outdoor Art League, the Arche Club, the Ridge Woman's Club, the First District Women's Clubs, the Second District Women's Clubs, the West End Woman's Club—truly an illuminating list of societies of æsthetic and nature-loving people. One would not have believed that there were so many individuals and societies who knew, appreciated and sought to save the Dunes. The exhibition was unique in



THE LAND OF SKY AND SONG
By Frank V. Dudley

that it claimed the attention of so many different classes of people, not only artists, connoisseurs and picture lovers, but scientists, nature worshippers and those exponents of fresh air and health culture who are ever on the lookout for week-end resorts where those things may be found amid settings of natural beauty.

It seemed a bit strange that with such a background of interest in the Dunes, Mr. Dudley had been the only one of our local painters to make the recording of their beauties a life work. That he had been equal to his task was felt as soon as one entered the galleries for the same sense of sweet isolation, aloof from the workaday world and alone with one's own soul stole into the heart here as in the hollows of the Dunes themselves. Mr. Dudley is painter and poet, and he brought to the Institute

with his exhibition the very spirit of this enchanted land.

For the benefit of those who are not so familiar with these fair shores of mighty Lake Michigan, it is only appropriate here to explain that the Dunes are one of the wonderful works of nature and one of the great scenic beauties of our native land. They extend along the south end of Lake Michigan from Gary to Michigan City and cover an area approximately one mile wide and twenty-five miles long, representing the work of one hundred times one thousand years, by such artists as the glaciers, water, wind and sun. Beginning in 1916, efforts have been under way to have these dune lands created a national park.

Stephen T. Mather, Director National Park Service, gives us this description, which is both scientific and poetic:

"These Sand Dunes are classified as among the finest in the world by scientists who are qualified to speak on deposits of sand of this character. I have never seen sand dunes that equal them in any degree. These are readily accessible to approximately five million people, and, furthermore, they are ideally located with respect to the center of population, which, when last determined, was in the State of Indiana."

They are world-famed among the scientists and of this Prof. Henry C. Cowles of the University of Chicago relates the following:

"Three years ago I had the great privilege of conducting through our country, a large number of the greatest scientists of Europe, the greatest botanists of Europe, men representing all the countries which are

now at war with one another.

"As there was so much in our country to see in the brief time that we had to see it in, I asked these people who had come here to indicate what they wanted to see in the United States in two months. There were three or four things that all of them mentioned as highly worth seeing, even in the briefest trip to the United States. One of these was the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, another was the Yosemite, another Yellowstone Park, and the fourth was the Lake Michigan Dunes."

These sand dunes, contrary to the generally accepted notion, are not mere accumulations of clean white sand from Lake Michigan with which the wind plays at will. They are deposits which constitute the action of the elements for ages past. The sand in hundreds of acres of this region



IN THE SHELTER OF THE DUNES
By Frank V. Dudley



A WINTER TRAIL
By Frank V. Dudley

has remained untouched for decades and perhaps centuries. Trees, large and small, have grown on the sand piles, and today form one of the scenic features of the dune country. Various vines, shrubs, reeds, grasses, and sedges thrive in these areas which are not in the process of diminution or augmentation, and wild flowers are found in great abundance.

A bill to buy the Dunes is ready for presentation to Congress, but the war has put a temporary check upon all such legislation. A hearing was granted by the Department of the Interior on this matter and many prominent men spoke for the preservation of the Dunes. Among them was Jens Jensen, the noted landscape artist, who stated the matter scientifically, æsthetically and ethnologically when he said, in part, as

follows:

"The dunes of northern Indiana are one of the great expressions of wild beauty in our country. They are the greatest of nature's expressions of this beauty in the Middle West, and as a type of landscape they are unequaled anywhere in the world.

"From an artistic standpoint the color expressions of spring and autumn are not equaled anywhere. Added to this is the movement and history of the dunes, dating back into geological ages thousands of years ago.

"The dunes represent a book of the great outdoors which man can never fully comprehend; but it is not the great dramatic things, which appeal perhaps more to the eye than the more intimate and hidden treasures, that gives the real charm to this bit of nature's landscape. It is among the sand hills that the real mystery of the dunes is to be found. In the dune meadows, in the bogs or tamarack swamps, or along hidden trails one feels the exquisite beauty of the hidden shrines of nature's great work. Carpets of flowers cover the hills and valleys of the dunes during spring and early summer—in fact, during the entire season. Here the lupine brings the first joy of spring to the visitor, with its beautiful handlike leaves upon which the rays of the

rising sun turn the dew of early morning, glistening in its palm, into millions of diamonds. Later a sea of blue covers the forest floor, and in late autumn we have the same expression in its beautiful leaves as in spring. Also in late autumn the gentian puts its color on the dune meadows, holding out until the winter blasts shrivel up the last flower. Along the trail asters stand in a blaze of glory as so many candles lighting up the way of the pilgrim who ventures into the woods on dark and gloomy autumn days, and in the wind rustling through trees that have seen generations pass below one fancies he can hear the chanting song of the Red Man, or the cradle song of the Indian squaw when listening to the murmuring waves breaking over the sandy beach of this dune country."

How our fancies respond and our hearts thrill to such sentiments and who can fail to feel the importance of preserving to posterity this wonderful work of nature which once defaced or destroyed can never be replaced. What more picturesque or marvelous contrast to a mighty work of man, such as in our western metropolis, could the most

vivid imagination demand than is supplied by these lonely stretches of sand and shrub along the water's edge and lying at our very gates.

What has been sketched here in words was told in full through the convincing language of line, mass and color in Mr. Dudley's lovely landscapes with their haunting spell of wild beauty as of nature all untouched by man. One knew at once that here was a heart that had fallen a captive to the spell of the Dunes for their very enchantment crept over one's own spirit in gazing upon their painted presentment.

Mr. Dudley's story of how he came to swear artistic allegiance and fidelity to the Dune country is most unusual. He had always looked upon this spot as a land of promise, but the mistake of seeking it most



*FROM MOUNT TOM
By Frank V. Dudley*



THE GUARDIANS OF THE DUNES
By Frank V. Dudley

often in summer had prevented a full realization of its charms. After joining the Prairie Club, however, participation in its "hikes" brought him to the Dunes in autumn, the season of their glory, and thence forward he knew he had found his theme. In summer, here as elsewhere, there is a monotony of green whereas under autumn's mellowing touch the most vivid and varied hues come forth to contrast with the neutral greys of sand and the darker tones of tree trunks and dead leaves. Winter, too, is fairylike in this haunt of primitive loveliness and Mr. Dudley has realized its exquisite delights in their fullest measure. Spring, too, is fascinating here, with all the tender tones of woodland wilds.

Of Mr. Dudley's winter pictures one of the most famed is that purchased by the Municipal Art League and permanently

hung at the Institute. It represents a deserted shack to whose eaves the sand and snow have drifted and its charm lies in the glow of the afternoon light and the color of the winter sun upon the snow. "Snow in the Dunes," herewith illustrated, is also lonely but alluring. One of Mr. Dudley's most important works, "Land of Sky and Song," is also shown, and in its breadth and sweep we feel all the rhythm and beauty of its title.

These pictures were, perhaps, as a whole, rather more descriptive than is usual with Mr. Dudley, for he has never been a painter who relied upon his subject-matter for interest. With him a simple thing executed in the right spirit has always resulted in a big picture. He has been known as an interpreter of moods and phases of light. In his Dunes exhibition, however, one felt

that he had employed their faculty to the best end possible uniting mood with theme and producing pictures that are both descriptive and emotional. A peculiarity of Mr. Dudley's work is that one appreciates it better the more one sees of it. Not unusual is the monotonous feeling experienced on viewing a one-man show; in fact, such an exhibition is a test of any man's versatility, a gauge of how many tunes he can pipe, and how much he really has to say. With Mr. Dudley we experience just the reverse, for in his Dunes exhibit his muse seemed as variable as nature herself and, like nature, always charming.

Nature indeed has been his only inspiration and his most assiduously revered instructor. She has influenced him more than schools or theories or other masters and those who know his works know this be-

fore it is spoken. While reasonably literal, his works are not, however, at variance with modern tendencies, for his technique is free and flowing and though he does not paint in the highest key it is still high enough for the light walls of modern interiors and a bit higher in this year's works than formerly.

Mr. Dudley is a Chicago man completely, having received his training at the Art Institute. In technique, outlook and choice of subject-matter, he is therefore representative, and perhaps for this reason full appreciation of his achievements will eventually come from abroad. However, he is far from being without honor in his own country and those among us who have learned to know and appreciate his abilities will one day have cause to congratulate themselves upon their artistic foresight.



THE SHADOW MARCH
By Frank V. Dudley